HEAVEN'S

ALL M L THE TIME

MICHAEL SWEET

NEWS FLASH: Oz Fox Joins Bloodgood!

BRIDE
BLISSED
BLACK METAL
NORDIC METAL FESTIVAL
INTERNATIONAL METAL REPORT

Feb/Mar 2007 Issue #67 $2.95

MORTIFICATION

"The Destroyer Beholds"

"Majestic Infiltration

"Lake of fire"

Brutal new re-issues coming your way from Rowe Productions. As we are all aware that back in '91 when the Self Titled Album came out many of you did not receive the T- shirts you ordered from that release from the dodgy US supplier. So now in support of the re- issue of The Self Titled album through Soundmass all those classic T- Shirt designs will be re- issued one to two month intervals throughout 2007. Check out the first 3 available!

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"Erasing The Goblin" CD

"Erasing The Goblin" T-Shirt

Please note. All Mortification albums released on Nuclear Blast are available to purchase online from itunes. You can simply buy a song you like or a complete albums. This has been a great windfall for the Ministry of Mortification & helps to see more $ available to share more Jesus Metal with more Metalheads. Support the Cause that supports you & buy from itunes today. We are officially paid for every sale from Nuclear Blast itunes purchases.

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Issue #67
February/March 2007

HEAVEN'S METAL®

Teamwork Wins Championships

All ... Right ... Tokyo! The Heaven's Metal "karew" / team has replenished its energies and added numbers (lots of new writers will be joining the fold over the next couple of months ... I won't spoil the surprise, but just let you enjoy their writing when it appears). One of the fresh new ideas to give Heaven's Metal Fanzine a shot in the arm was to add an international focus. While we're still tweaking as we go, I'm stoked to introduce Pastor Bob's International Report and various news bullets from overseas. As anyone with a metal heart will tell you (insert foreign accent here): "the metal music – it does thrive in Europe and beyond." I'm working on the cover collage and haven't finished it yet (plus I've only received about 36 photos ... the rest of you need to get with it and email or snail-mail me your photo!). Stay tuned.

Grace and Peace,

ELEMENTS

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HMmagazine.com/heavensmetal/

1-year subscriptions (6 issues): $7.77 (USA) | $21.77 (Foreign)

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512.989.7309 | 1660 CR 424, Taylor TX 76574
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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads

NORDIC FEST

REVIEW BY JONAS DAHLBERG

This was my first time visiting the NordicFest, located in Oslo, Norway. The festival line-up this year was very interesting, and most people thought it was one of the best line-ups ever. Of course, this had much to do with two acts: the first show ever with the legendary unblack metal band **Horde**, and the first and last **Paramaecium** show ever outside Australia.

Thursday started off in a great way with two excellent performances by the Finnish metalcore band **Sotahuuto** and the Norwegian thrash metal assault that is **Forgery**. After the first day everything felt great – sweet sound and lights, high festival spirit and you could feel that the rest of the festival would be a success. After three kicking bands, it was time to leave the concert venue and head towards the well-known Holy Riders Cave, where everyone was staying for the night.

When I arrived to the concert venue on Friday, I could feel that most of the visitors were looking forward to see **Extol** and, of course, Horde. Extol delivered a great show, with songs from all their albums, and also a juicy fresh song. The audience went nuts when the band played songs like "Celestial Completion," "Undeceived" and "Your Beauty Divine." After Extol it was time for the legendary Horde show, which many people had been looking forward to since it was surprisingly announced some months before the festival. When the curtain was pulled, the stage was armored with four people covered in ninja masks. **Jayson Sherlock**, the myth behind Horde himself, played drums and did the vocals, and three guys from the Norwegian black metal band **Drottnar** filled in on guitars and bass. Horde played most of the songs from their one and only album, *Hellig Usvart*, that was released in 1994 on Nuclear Blast Records. On the song "Invert the Inverted Cross," **Pilgrim** of **Crimson Moonlight** entered the stage covered in blood, and did the vocals together with Jayson. For many festival visitors this was the best concert they've ever been to, and you could feel the satisfaction afterwards.

At the breakfast on Saturday, there were two surprise bands that performed over at the Cave. **Frosthardr** from Norway delivered some cold black metal, and **Messiahs Beard** from Sweden pulled off an awesome show, filled with old school thrash metal and great energy.

After those shows, it was time for a press conference, with members from Horde, Paramaecium, Extol, Drottnar, **Antestor**, Crimson Moonlight and **Pantokrator**. The questions from the audience were varied. They asked about everything from, "if Christians can play black metal?" to "which animal the band members would chose to become if they had to?"

At 19:00 the concert venue opened its doors and **Schlagzaner** began to play their cinematic show with the band standing behind a big curtain where loads of pictures were shown. Amazingly cool, but it all felt more like a cinema with a really good music theme than a concert. When Schlagzaner finished their gig and left the stage, it was time for the Swedish melodic metal band **Evergrace** to kick some serious (you know what). And that's exactly what they did. They handled their instruments very well; but the performance wasn't very impressive, it's probably because of their hair length (ha!). Loads of people were really looking forward to see Paramæcium. The band's set consisted mostly of songs from the first albums, but they had some new songs in the set as well.

NordicFest 2006 really impressed me and there was a good difference between the bands, a nice mix between slow and soft hard rock and devastating extreme metal. Thanks for a great arrangement. I am definitely going next year as well, no matter what bands will play!

Photos by Stefan Bruhn

News bullets

Things have been popping in the **Bloodgood** camp lately. The band has entered into a management agreement with Fused Management, their DVD is being picked up for international distribution in the spring, and you may already know that their entire back catalog is now available at all the major download sites (iTunes, Napster, Rhapsody, etc.). And if that isn't enough, they have a new album in the works, too. And this just in: "**Oz Fox** has just agreed to be in Bloodgood along with **Paul Jackson**!" states bassist **Michael Bloodgood**. It's something I've been thinking and praying about for years (ever since Oz and I were in England together back in 2000). Of course, he has not left **Stryper** and Stryper will always be the priority, but, be that as it may, he is excited about becoming a member of our band. And it gets better: We're going to be doing shows with Stryper in April '07 in Seattle, Portland and Boise – right before GMA."

Liberty N' Justice announces two more singers for their upcoming 2007 release, entitled *Independence Day*. This release will feature 15 guest vocalists on 14 songs. "Monkey Dance" will feature none other than Jack Russell of Great White on vocals and "Snake Eat Snake" will feature vocals by **David Raymond Reeves** and guitarist **Don Webster** of **Neon Cross**. The CD will be an acoustic rock project and both sample songs and the front cover artwork appear for a limited time at myspace.com/libertynjustice2

Disciple released *Scars Remain* in early November, stated to be their most ambitious record to date. The single "Regime Change" sits at #10 with a bullet on Christian Rock Radio and shows no signs of slowing. Their single "Game On" was chosen to be the theme song to a recent WWE pay-per-view event. They were showcased at ringside for *WWE Cyber Sunday live* on November 5th in Cincinnati, OH. "Game On" played five times throughout the evening. Neil A. Lawi, General Manager at WWE Music Group states, "'Game On' by Disciple was the ideal theme song for this year's *WWE Cyber Sunday*; it had the energy and feel of what this Pay-Per-View was all about."

Due to "irreconcilable differences," **Lance King** will no longer be singing with **Pyramaze**. Lance says: "I would like to thank the Pyramaze guys for many wonderful memories, I'm very proud of the music we created together! I wish each and every member of the band success in their careers and personal lives, as well as their search for a new vocalist. I look forward to hearing their new music." Lance has several projects that he is working on at present, including a new album from **Avian** that he will be singing on and producing. He will also make a guest vocalist appearance alongside a female opera singer on the debut release from a rising prog star named, Salinoch (being developed by SHK Records of Switzerland). Lance has also agreed to lend his voice and writing talents to a new progressive-shred project called Secret Society of Starfish, comprised of two members of Dimension X and shredder Troy Stetina on guitar and a mystery 5th arm of the fish.

Can you find God in classic rock?

BY TREVOR RAY & JONATHAN SWANK

One day, while talking with a friend about life and such, I had the gumption to ask him: "Can a rock song save someone?" Now this guy is not Christian, is in a local punk band, just the average punk "Joe."

"Nah, don't know man," he replied. That was the end of that. Nevertheless, the idea of someone being saved through a secular rock song is indeed an interesting and challenging question in search of an answer.

There are several ways a person might move toward salvation, or become inclined spiritually, by listening to a secular song. First, a person's environment, circumstances or station in life could determine how they might respond to a secular rock song. In talking with Daryn Hinton, she commented, "I know you have heard of the time a guy went into a room to shoot himself and he turned on the stereo to cover up the sound and a Stryper song was playing and he listened to the words instead and wrote us that the music saved his life." While Stryper is not a secular band, the story illustrates how God reached out and touched someone at a very critical time in their life through a song. A good secular example of this could be found in Pearl Jam's "Life Wasted."

I'm never going back again
Having tasted, a life wasted
I'm never going back again

Second, the negative image associated with the lifestyle and lyrics of secular artists could push someone toward a relationship with God or prompt them to seek an alternative lifestyle from the one they are currently living. When Brian Head gave his testimony regarding his salvation, he said his daughter, at age 5, was singing a very negative song around the house. He realized the music he was playing was having a negative impact on his family, so he rejected it and the experience motivated him to climb out of a very negative and empty lifestyle.

Third, an interest in having a relationship with God might be sparked by something spiritual within the lyrics that awaken the listener to a pursuit of truth. For example, a question posed by the lyricist may prompt the listener to ask oneself: "What is the meaning of life?" or "Why do I exist?" or "What is my place or purpose in life?" Jewel's song "Who Will Save Your Soul?" is one such example.

Who will save your soul
when it comes to the flower?
Who will save your soul
after all the lies that you told, boy

Another such example can be found in the infamous words of U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For."

You broke the bonds and you
Loosed the chains
Carried the cross
Of my shame
Of my shame
You know I believed it
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for

In summary, it is entirely possible, by the intervention of the Holy Spirit, for someone to be saved or spiritually motivated through a secular rock song, whether it's Stevie Wonder or In Flames. Artists and listeners alike know the power conveyed through music; the melody and message can reach into the minds and hearts of people to produce either good or evil. It isn't the music itself that is evil, or the instruments used to make the music. Ultimately, it is the lyrics behind the music that influence people and it is through those same lyrics that God can reach out to a person who is seeking Him, and allow that person to find His comforting grace and love.

To see an extended version of this, visit hmmag.com/heavensmetal

Bullets from Sweden

by Johannes Jonsson

Progressive Power Metal band **Majestic Vanguard** are happy to announce that **Peter Sigfridsson**, their vocalist now is much better in his vocal cords and that he will rejoin the band in a few weeks. The band will also do a simple promotion video this fall. The recordings will be carried out in a ruined abbey. If everything goes as planned, the video will be found on the website in the beginning of December. [majesticvanguard.net]

Torbjorn and **Thomas Weinesjo** have left the band **Hero**. Their replacements will be announced soon. [heroesplace.com]

Divinefire's 3rd studio album, *Into A New Dimension,* is now out on Rivel Records. The band's new video, "Facing The Liar," can be watched at the band's myspace page. [myspace.com/divinefireofficial]

Grimmark is the band name of **Carl Johan Grimmark**, guitar player of **Narnia** & **Rob Rock**'s solo band featuring **Peter Wildoer** (**Darkane**, **Majestic**) & **Jan S Eckert** (**Masterplan**) Carl Johan is handling the guitars, keyboards, lead & backing vocals.
[myspace.com/grimmark]

This new great melodic extreme metal band, **Miseration**, is led by **Jani Stefanovic** (Divinefire, **Essence Of Sorrow**) and on lead vocals we find **Christian Alvestam** (**Scar Symmetry**). Other great musicians involved on this album are **Patrik Gardberg** (**Ammotrack**, Divinefire) **Barry Haldan** (ex-**Renascent**) The album is titled: *Your Demons, Their Angels*.
[myspace.com/miseration]

Grimmark, Miseration & Essence Of Sorrow albums will be finished in the near future with planned release dates on Rivel Records in early 2007. Both Miseration and Essence Of Sorrow will also be released on King Records in Japan in December.

Jani Stefanovic (Divinefire, Miseration) is busy these days and **Essence Of Sorrow** is a great metal release featuring very good people, such as **Mats Levén** (Malmsteen, Therion, At Vance), **Christian Palin** (Random Eyes), **Mikko Harkin** (**Wingdom**, **Random Eyes**, ex-**Sonata Artica**) and more. The album will be titled *Reflections Of The Obscure*. Visit essenceofsorrow.com or myspace.com/essenceofsorrow for more info.

Crimson Moonlight reports that **Erik Tordsson** has left the band. New guitar player is **Jocke Malmborg** of **Inevitable End**. The new EP, "*In Depths Of Dreams Unconsious,*" will soon be released in Europe. Look for a release before the end of the year.
[crimsonmoonlight.com]

Pantokrator will enter the studio in early December to record their new album, *Aurum*. [pantokrator.com] The album will be released by Whirlwind Records in Germany. [whirlwind-records.de]

The thrashers of **Inevitable End** has had some memberchanges lately. **Marcus Bertilsson** has joined the band on guitars, which means that the band now has two guitar players. Longtime drummer **Christoffer Johansson** has also decided to leave the band, to study in Bible school. The band totally respects Christoffer's decision and wishes him good luck. A new drummer will soon be announced. [inevitable-end.tk/]

Veni Domine is in the studio the rest of 2006 to record the next CD. [venidomine.com]

WE, THE READERS

Hey Doug, when are we, your readers, going to see an article (possibly cover story) on Saint? Personally, I would also like to see something on Seventh Avenue and Jacob's Dream, too. Bloodgood would be great, too. Thank you for covering such great bands as Narnia, Rock Rob, and Theocracy.
–Gary, via internet

DON'T SAY THAT!

Hi Doug from Australia. I am a subscriber to the Heaven's Metal fanzine and love it. I look 4ward to getting the new issue (with Theocracy, Jimmy Brown etc) any day. Someone told me at a forum (maybe christian metal realm) that you said something like "I don't know why I continue with Heaven's Metal mag..." I hope you didn't say this! I greatly enjoy getting this mag every 2 months and hope it continues more and more – maybe expanding a little to include more Prog rock type stuff. I stopped getting HM mag a few years ago and find that very boring, but metal is very strong nowdays – the best i've seen it since the late 80s/early 90s. Please keep the fanzine going and include articles/reviews in coming months on Once Dead, My Silent Wake, Ikarian (formerly Visionaire), Virgin Black, Neal Morse, Jacobs Dream, Protokaw, Deliverance (returned), Grimmark, etc. I personally think you should reduce the HM mag and expand Heaven's Metal again!
–Dwellceller, via internet

Ed – Thanks for the encouragement. One of the things the new expanded team has talked about is increasing our prog rock coverage. Take care.

FIRST TIME I SAW YOUR FACE

Hi guys, Just happened across your page and the first time I've heard of Heaven's Metal. Looks awesome! I'll definitely have to check this one out! Let's keep reminding the world that Jesus loves Metal too!
–Jody Irsik, Fort Lupton, CO

I'M NOT DALE

Hi Dale (Thompson)... Well you guys have really, *really* outdone yourselves this time. I could not have hoped for a better record from Bride. *Skin for Skin* is absolutely amazing. It is quite likely your best record ever. I will need to give it more than just 24 hours before I make that call. Why haven't you guys been on the cover of HM?!?!?! Someone needs to plead with Mr. Van Pelt and let him know that there are still a ton of Bride fans here in the States. I would be completely shocked if you didn't increase your fanbase greatly with this one. Thank you, again, Dale. As you can see I've cc'd this to Doug Van Pelt. People need to hear this record. I want to see Bride on the cover of HM again! All of God's Blessings,
–Kevin Ryan, via internet

Ed – Bride was actually slated to be on the cover of this issue of Heaven's Metal Fanzine, but the photos they supplied me with were not good, and the photos of the other large article we're doing for that issue (Michael Sweet) were fantastic. That is the only reason why they're not on the cover of this next issue. This new album is good, isn't it? I'm pretty happy with it, too.

DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'

I wanted to drop you a note because you mentioned that you were not sure if it was worth the effort for putting out Heaven's Metal. I just want to let you know that I subscribe to 4 music publications, and Heaven's Metal is the one I value the most. Nowhere else can you get coverage and reviews of the classic metal bands like Saint, Final Axe, etc. I greatly appreciate the fanzine and would like to see it turn into a full blown magazine. Also, I want to mention that the Seventh Power album recently released is awesome. Bill Menchen and Robert Sweet have done it again. I love what they did on the Final Axe: *Axe of the Apostles* album, and I like what they did on the Seventh Power album. Both are 5 star albums in my opinion. Keep up the good work and thank you.
–George DelSignore, Franklin, MA

Ed – Do you hear that Journey song playing in the background, too? Thanks for the encouragement. Lord willing, with the larger team we have now working on this, we'll keep putting out Heaven's Metal for a good time.

BE LOOKING FOR MY PHOTO

I just wanted to send you some encouragement to keep Heaven's Metal running. I like the fact that that you cover the bands that have been around from back in the day such as Stryken, Stryper and Tourniquet etc... I enjoyed the interview with Ty Tabor of Kings X. I also appreciate the fact that you also cover artists like Jimmy P Brown II letting us know what he is up to. Also it's great reading about the metal of today like Divinefire, Theocracy and Temple of Blood. These bands along with many others I think are defining where Christian Metal is going.
–Rob Deacon, via internet

[nothin' but] **News bullets**

Bombworks Records has just inked a deal with Twilight Mailorder and Distribution, which will make its releases available in many more mail-orders as well as retail outlets in all 3 countries.

Jacob's Dream is continuing work on the material for the follow-up to 2005's *Drama of the Ages*, entitled *Dominion of Darkness*. This will be the group's fourth release on Metal Blade Records and the second release with new vocalist **Chaz Bond**. A video of the band performing at the Hard Rock Café in San Juan, Puerto Rico from October 14 has been posted online at YouTube.com.

Frost Like Ashes has just finished tracking vocals for "When The Man Comes Around" for their part of the *Johnny Cash Metal* tribute album being released by Open Grave Records in 2007. They are also working hard in the studio on an album called *Covered In Frost,* which will feature songs from pioneers in the Christian rock and metal scene. Some of the songs to be included are Petra's "Rose Colored Stain Glass Windows", Larry Norman's "Six Sixty Six," as well Saint's "Plan 2." Original **Saint** guitarist **John Mahan** has agreed to play on the new extreme metal version. *Covered in Frost* is not expected to be finished until sometime next summer. This will also include some new original material as well as a remake of the song "Immortals." Almost sold out is the new and extremely limited edition DVD *Live in Omaha*, this is only available thru myspace.com/frostlikeashes.

Strobie Records is pleased to announce that November 7, 2006 marked the release of legendary guitarist **Phil Keaggy**'s critically acclaimed instrumental "looping" project, *Roundabout*. The album is a genre-defying 18-track collection that fuses elements of rock, blues and jazz and is the culmination of Keaggy's 30-year love affair with looping technology. On the project, Keaggy adds a new twist to the art of guitar playing with his mastery of live electronic "looping," which allows him to combine the sounds of multiple guitar parts, using only one acoustic guitar. "*Roundabout* is all about creative and playful improvisation. There were no overdubs after the initial recording or during editing in the studio," Keaggy says. "All parts on each track were recorded then and there. It just shows how far one can go with an acoustic guitar with the aid of some looping machines and effects processors." Rave reviews are already streaming in about Phil Keaggy and his album, *Roundabout*, which features the song "Happy Feet," currently on the first round ballot for the 2007 Grammy Awards in the jazz category for "Best Jazz Instrumental Solo."

Available for the first time ever, answering the question, "How does he do that?" is *Glenn Kaiser's School of Blues Volume 1 Instructional DVD*! A blues master in his own right, **Glenn Kaiser** provides the viewer with a friendly educational experience, jam-packed with information on technique, how-to's and more.

The debut album from **Inhale/Exhale**, *The Lost, The Sick, The Sacred* is finally out on Solid State Records.

RETROACTIVE RECORDS

JUPITER VI – BACK FROM MARS
Wild, musical brilliance from metal icon, Jimmy Brown (Deliverance). A cauldron of vibrant creativity, with infectious hooks from start to finish! Rock critics are calling *Back From Mars* an important, breakthrough record! For fans of Deliverance, The Killers, David Bowie and Iggy Pop!

FINAL AXE – THE AXE OF THE APOSTLES
"Fists to the sky, headbanging, leather-clad heavy metal! *The Axe of the Apostles* is pure heavy metal, not unlike bands like Armored Saint, Saint, and early Savatage. Crunchy guitars, headbanging riffs, guitar solos, sing-along choruses, and the whole nine yards...." nolifetilmetal.com (Scott Waters / Ultimatum) Features STRYPER'S Robert Sweet on drums!!!

THE SEVENTH POWER – THE SEVENTH POWER
Featuring Robert Sweet (STRYPER) on drums and Bill Menchen (TITANIC/FINAL AXE), this sinister metal album will delight fans of melodic, almost doomy metal, in the vein of classic Black Sabbath and Ozzy.

EMOTION – EMOTION (Special Edition)
This is melodic metal from Sweden, influenced by progressive metal greats (Narnia, Rob Rock, and Sacred Warrior) as much as from the classics (Deep Purple/ Rainbow). Remastered, with the five tracks from the ultra rare *Tip To Toe* EP added as a bonus!

BRIDE – SKIN FOR SKIN
All new release from Christian metal greats! Strident, triumphant, and astoundingly self-assured, expect razor-sharp, muscular riffs, and Dale's most accomplished vocals to-date! This is THE release fans have been begging for!

X-SINNER – FIRE IT UP
Re-recorded classic X-sinner songs that ruled the Christian rock and metal charts! Beefed up guitars, improved solos, and killer vocals - the way the band always wanted it! "Taking the all out raw energy of AC/DC and combining it with the catchy hooks and commercial sensibility of Def Leppard, *Fire It Up* proves (to be)...fresh, memorable and exciting..." anglicwardlord.com

SERVANT – CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF LOVING HIM
Melodic rock reissue from 1983, the band perfected the new wave influenced rock of bands like The Cars, Duran Duran, and early 77's! Limited Edition

SERVANT – WORLD OF SAND
Originally released in 1982, expect the rock hooks of Supertramp and Petra, with the heaviness of Bad Company and Resurrection Band! Limited Edition

THE LEAD – HARDCORE FOR JESUS (1986-1989)
A 49 song, 2 CD, Slayer-riffic sonic assault from beginning to end! Let the speed metal riffing and slam dancing commence! In the vein of Suicidal Tendencies, The Crucified, and D.R.I. Limited Edition 1000 Units!

All releases available from radrockers.com, cdbaby.com, amazon.com, christiandiscs.com and your favorite online stores!

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MICHAEL SWEET | H-I-M

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS BECK

Stryper is arguably the most successful Christian rock band of all time. They always seemed to be in the spotlight during the '80s as evidenced by the gold records, sold out concerts and videos that aired constantly on MTV. After a long hiatus, Stryper got back together and released the album Reborn last year. Michael Sweet has now followed that up with the recent release of his praise & worship album Him, putting Michael back in the spotlight with appearances on At Home Live and TBN, amongst others. We talked with Michael about these recent releases, his thoughts on if Stryper is only in it for the money, and what 2007 has in store for him and the band.

Chris Beck: You recently released the album *Him*. Tell us a little bit about the recording of that album.

Michael Sweet: It's been a long process and in the making for a long time. I started leading worship at my church about five years ago, and having not grown up in the church, I wasn't familiar with most of the old traditional hymns, just a handful of them–traditional hymns like, "How Great Thou Art" and "Amazing Grace." Of course, I knew those – "Christ the Lord is Risen Today," the stand-bys – but most of the old hymns I had no clue as to the melodies or how they were sung or the lyrics or anything. So, leading worship I had people coming up to me every Sunday asking if the following Sunday if I could learn a hymn, and the hymns that they were asking me about and asking me to learn I had no idea what they were talking about. So, I went out and I bought a hymnal and I familiarized myself with the hymns. Just sitting in my studio one night reading through the hymnal, I was reading a lot of these incredibly powerful words and they just bowled me over. It was unbelievable – hairs standing up on my arms reading some of these words, because these words were so powerful – again, not knowing what the music is. So, I just pulled my guitar off the wall and started strumming chords and writing chords, and it began there. As I said, it was a long, drawn out process. It began with me writing some chords and melodies to some of these words. I started recording them in my basement studio – just a guitar, an acoustic guitar, and then I added some electric guitar, and then I added vocals, and it went from that to what it is now, which is certainly a lot more produced as far as parts go. It's a real low budget record; not a lot was spent on it. I did it myself. I just basically did it here in my house and didn't work with a lot of

"Look, this is what we do. This is why we're here. This is why we do it, and we've got to get off our cans here and get out there and do what we're called to do."

people. I worked with a guy named Kenny Lewis and a few other musicians, but it wasn't your typical record done through a label, where so many people have their hands on the project itself. It wasn't done that way.

So how did you go about selecting the songs? Did they become obvious as you looked through the hymnal?
They did. What I began doing was...the first song that really hit me was a song called "Take My Life and Let it Be." I was so moved by those words. That was the one that led me to pick the guitar up and start writing chords and a melody to those lyrics. Then, as time went on and I started doing this more and more with different words, I would start to write this music and then find the lyrics that would fit the phrasing and the structure of the song, if that makes any sense. Then I kind of wound up going down that road on a number of songs as well. So it reversed, coming from the music and placing the lyrics with the music, versus coming from the lyrics and placing the music to the lyrics. So, it was a little bit of both throughout the process. It was really cool, though; it was a different way to make a record. A lot of fun. I had a blast doing it. The funnest part about it was not having a bunch of people telling you how to make a record. It was just cool; there were no guidelines or deadlines or pressure from people at a label saying we need this and we need it like this and we need it at this time. It was just so awesome to sit there and take my time and let the musical juices flow.

Since it's a bit of a different album, is this an album you would envision touring for, maybe playing a couple of songs here and there for some churches? What are your plans there?
I did some shows, not many, but I did a few. We went out as Stryper. We performed some churches, as well. I did a few of the songs there.

Let's talk about Stryper a little bit. The band recently came out with the *Live in Puerto Rico* DVD. Are you happy with how that turned out?
You know what? I am happy with how the performance and the concert turned out – the footage and the audio. I'm not happy with the fact that it was just such an odd situation with that DVD, because it was in limbo for such a long time – just kind of hanging out there, not knowing if it's going to get released, get shelved, not knowing really what to do with it. So, there wasn't for the longest time any budget to do any more with it. We had some high expectations and high hopes to add behind the scenes footage – us hanging out on tour, possibly some videos ... all kinds of stuff. To be frank and truthful, the money just wasn't there. It costs a lot of money, you know? As it is, we were in about 40-45,000 dollars, and we did it on our own. It's real tricky when you're doing stuff on your own. You can't just go out and spend your mortgage. Life doesn't work that way. We wanted it to be more than it is, but we're very happy with what is there – extremely happy. I can only hope that everyone else who purchased it is happy as well. Down the road, we do plan to add to it and do a full on, full blown release.

So what's the biggest change in your mind between ... you recently released *Reborn* and *Him* ... What's the biggest change in the music industry now versus when Stryper released its first record?
Oh, man...well, the biggest change – obviously it's apparent to everybody – is the whole internet versus CD; music sales on the shelves versus music sales online. I think we are not heading there – we're there. Everyone buys their music online, or most everyone. Anyone with a computer, with the downloads and everything I think it's really taking its toll and affecting – although people pay for downloads nowadays most of the time – I think it's really affecting especially the labels, who depend upon selling CDs and the package itself. So, CDs are kind of a thing of the past, or certainly will be in the near future, I think.

I better sell my collection before it's too late (laughs).
It's kind of scary, you know, in the next 4, 5, 6, 7 years... What's the format going to be (laughs)? It's like, wow, interesting, crazy...but it is taking its toll on especially the labels. Is that a good thing or a bad thing? I don't know. I think labels make too much money, anyways, and the artist only makes a buck, $1.10, $1.20, $1.30, or $1.40 if they're lucky, per unit. Labels get the rest.

What would you say to those people that say, "Stryper...they only got back together because of the money?"
Well, I would say to them that if it was just because of the money, we would have hung it up after the '03 tour, because we wound up losing money. We didn't make any money; we did a tour in '05, and we went in the hole $24,000. *Reborn* has sold 32,000 units – we haven't seen a penny for it. Except the up front money, you know – the record budget money, advance money – that's recoupable, and we haven't seen any royalties. My point is, we haven't really made any money. If we did this for the money, where's the money? So that's kind of funny, and certainly not true.

When you guys were out on tour for *Reborn,* what was your sense of the audience's reaction? Were they there to enjoy the show, which certainly is understandable – they paid to see you guys – or did you have a lot of opportunity to minister from the stage or perhaps after the show?
Yeah, we did. We always have the opportunity to minister before the show and after the show. We make it a point to go out after every show and hang out, sign autographs, talk to people. Hopefully, if we have the opportunity and someone comes up and wants to talk to us about something serious or have us pray over them or for them, we do so. I mean, that's really why we're there. It's hard sometimes, because when you're really tired ... you've got to get on the bus and travel 500 miles and get up and play four nights in a row, following that show you just did. Sometimes you're like, "Oh, man, I'm beat up. I don't want to do this," just because you're beat. But we've got to constantly remind ourselves that, "Look, this is what we do. This is why we're here. This is why we do it, and we've got to get off our cans here and get out there and do what we're called to do." And that really is to share the Gospel. Not just to go out there and rock and put on a show and exit stage left. It's to share the Gospel. Not just share it, but you know, water those seeds, and try to encourage people to get into church and read their Word, and help people ... you know, be there for people, people that are struggling; hopefully we can help them aside from the music and the stage. But yeah, to answer your question, we've always been about that, and we throw out Bibles, and we pray at the end of every show. It's basically the sinner's prayer; it's basically an altar call, you know, people coming forward. I mean, that's the most important part about all of this to us, and my gosh, if people don't see that, if there's anyone out there reading or listening who don't agree or don't see that, gosh, I don't know what else there is to say, you know, because this has been our lives, you know? We're all in our forties, mid-forties, and it's been our lives since we were teenagers and will continue to be our lives. We love the Lord and we want to share that, and we're willing to sacrifice and do whatever it takes to make it happen.

You guys had a fairly unusual show scheduled for a little while. In September, you were supposed to play a show with the band Slayer. The show actually got canceled, but heading into that, what were your thoughts about that and would you consider doing something like that again?
Well, it was pretty wild, because before we took the show, we were debating whether or not we should go do it. Back in '85-'86, we wouldn't have even batted an eye twice about it. We took shows like that left and right, grinning from ear to ear, you know, going on stage and doing them, no question. But nowadays, being older, we have families; we don't want to go out there and be fools and put ourselves in jeopardy. So we just thought, "Well, gosh, is this something we should do?" And we thought, "Yeah, you know what, it is." We prayed about it and talked about it, and we all decided, "Yeah, let's go do this." We'll just really be careful and be prayed up and go. So, to find out that we're into this, and we're hearing all the comments on

Continued on page 10

certain forums and what not, and we're thinking, "Oh, man, this is going to be heavy duty." And then it fell apart, for whatever reason. Slayer wound up pulling out; I really don't know why they pulled out. I'm sure, giving them the benefit of the doubt, I'm sure it was because they had maybe other commitments, or something else that was more of a priority came up. No big deal. We just felt once they pulled out, there was really no need for us to do it, because really we took it on because they were on the bill. We wanted to go. The challenge of going and standing up on the stage and sharing the Gospel with a bunch of Slayer fans – it was like we were ready and willing to take that on, that's kind of what we do. You know, the fact that they weren't on the bill anymore, we just thought, "Well, we could still go do it, but..."

You might have a lot of bitter Slayer fans yelling at you the whole time.
I don't know. But we just felt at that moment, the minute we found out they weren't doing the show, we knew that it just wasn't really something we should do. We wound up having other things, other commitments anyways, so it just worked out. But we would love to do some more shows or maybe even a tour with Slayer down the road. We'd totally be game for that.

How do you balance, at this point in your life, touring and the music industry with your family and with God?
It's hard. You have to sacrifice, certainly. Aside from sacrifice and being away from your family and your everyday life at your home, and your neighborhood and your town, you gotta stay rooted and grounded and you've got to really sacrifice your time out on the road to devote to God. It's real easy to get out on the road and get caught up in the road life – living out of a suitcase, town to town, going to malls, going to movies, and just kind of goofing off.

No real responsibility.
None, except checking your e-mail and playing. You've got to keep that discipline, and encourage one another. That's really the key – is encouraging one another, not forcing, but just encouraging each other to pray. (As though to the other band members) "Hey guys, everyone's watching a movie maybe they shouldn't be watching..." I don't mean a porn movie, but something that might not be too edifying and something we shouldn't be watching. "Hey guys, why don't we skip the movie and go back to the back of the bus and talk and pray and read some Word." Encouraging each other to do that constantly, because if we don't, no one will take the initiative. So, we're always encouraging each other to do that, and we wind up going off a lot, up to the top balcony of the hotel, to the back of the bus, in a park, wherever ... we just kind of get away. We would love to go out and tour if it's good for the family, if we could bring our families and certainly at least bring them out from time to time and travel with us, because we can't go out like the old days and be gone for two or three months straight. That just doesn't work. That doesn't work even if you're single (laughs).

Do you feel like you have fulfilled the Lord's calling on your life with the time you've spent with Stryper and in your solo work, or are there still things left to do?
I think there's so much left to do, with number one being so much growth left for me to go through. I feel like I'm just a baby in Christ and I've got so much to learn, and I unfortunately learn the hard way by making the same mistakes over and over and over again. And I'm just sick of it; I wish I could just get it. I want to get it, I desire to get it, so that's the cool thing about it. I'm thankful for that. Have I done everything? No, absolutely not. There's so much left to be done, and God's given me maybe not the most talent in the world or the most abilities in the world, but He certainly has given me a heart after His own will, passionately, and I want to follow that and just hope for the best, and hope that in some small way what He has given to me touches someone out there. Gosh, if it's one person or if it's a million people, whatever, I can go to my grave saying, "Well, I tried. I tried to reach some people, and I think we did it."

What do you see being the plans for yourself and for Stryper in 2007?
Definitely a new record. We're getting ready to start on a new record over the next couple of weeks. We're going to start doing pre-production.

Are the songs written already?
I came home like a madman. I've had a bunch of ideas floating around in my head for the last four or five or six months, and I came home from L.A. and Las Vegas about two and a half weeks ago and just pulled out my guitar and just went crazy, and started writing, writing, writing, lyrics, lyrics, lyrics, and I wound up writing in the past couple of weeks, completing about 11 songs. I'm still writing and working on songs. I hope to get another two or three in the can and then I'm going to just kind of do rough demos of those and we're going to go out and do pre-production, rehearse as a band in the next three weeks – December 11, approximately. We're going to go for about nine or ten days in Vegas. That's the plan, and then take the holidays off and then hopefully start recording sometime around the first or second week of January.

That's great! I didn't realize it was going to be so soon. I realize it's early in the process, but if you can give the readers of Heaven's Metal a slight taste as to the direction you guys are heading, what would that be, musically speaking?
Well, I'll tell you this ... I change my mind a lot. That's one of my weaknesses, or it could be one of my strengths – I don't know. But I do change my mind a lot, because I don't think things through. Something I said – I opened my big mouth and said on the forum on-line, so it's all over the place – is that the next record's going to be real heavy. Heavy, heavy, heavy... I said this, and now I'm the king of eating crow here, and I'm thinking, "Oh, man." It's going to be heavy in a sense that it's going to have that edgy Stryper edge to it. It's going to have that. It's not going to be heavy metal of 1985, but it's going to have edge and kick.

Wow, you've got me excited about it now. Looking back, which songs do you constantly go back to as being your favorites and why?
Well, there's certain songs that just never get old when you play them live. There's only a handful. Some of those songs are obvious favorites, like: "To Hell With the Devil," "Soldiers Under Command," "Calling on You," "Free," "Reach Out." Those are just songs that not only the crowd gets more excited about live, but the band gets more excited about live. There's just something about them. And then a lot of songs on the new album: "Passion," "Reborn," "Open Your Eyes" – these are songs that just really were fun to play live and unfortunately didn't get the attention really they kind of deserved. It's sad, so sad, to know that so many people don't even know about the record. There's a number of songs, too, that we would like to never do again. Songs like – I'll speak for myself – that I'm kind of burnt out on: "Makes Me Wanna Sing." People love it though, live. I don't know, I could do without it, no sweat. There's a few others like, uh, you know, I don't know ... "Sing-Along Song," because we've played it to death every tour since 1985.

You mentioned that you lead the music service at your church. Is that right?
I did. I don't at this very moment, as we speak. Still going to church; I'm going to a different church now in Rockland, about 45 minutes from my house and we like it. It's real difficult to find a church that we're comfortable in or that we really love here in our area. There's not a lot of Christian churches; (there are) a lot of Catholic churches – which is great, awesome, nothing against Catholic churches. But, we come from Calvary Chapel; Raul Reis was our pastor. There's just a few Calvary Chapels here in this area, and we've got to make the drive. I'm not leading worship these days, but I tell you, some of my days when I was leading worship were the best. I will never forget, and it really took me to a whole other place.

So, when you led worship was it pretty rocking or pretty laid back?
Pretty laid back. Most of the time it was just me. We had a home church. We met in our home and we would rotate with three other homes, so there were four homes total. We met here and there were about maybe, at times, 15, 16, 17 families meeting in our home. I would walk out with an acoustic guitar and go through five or six worship songs, and then the pastor started playing with me, and then Hillary Bird, who plays violin would join us and people just started joining in, and it kind of grew from there. But it was real laid back. It wasn't rocking drums, bass, electric guitars, that kind of thing. It was more of just an acoustic, unplugged, very personal worship service ... real nice, really cool.

Well, Michael, any last words for the readers of Heaven's Metal?
Well, the readers of Heaven's Metal and, of course, Mr. Van Pelt, all you guys, have been so supportive from day one to now, and I can't thank you guys enough. It's been really encouraging to see that support. I just want to thank you guys for your time, and for standing behind us when a lot of other people did not and don't, and we're appreciative, we're grateful, we're thankful. Again, I can't say enough.

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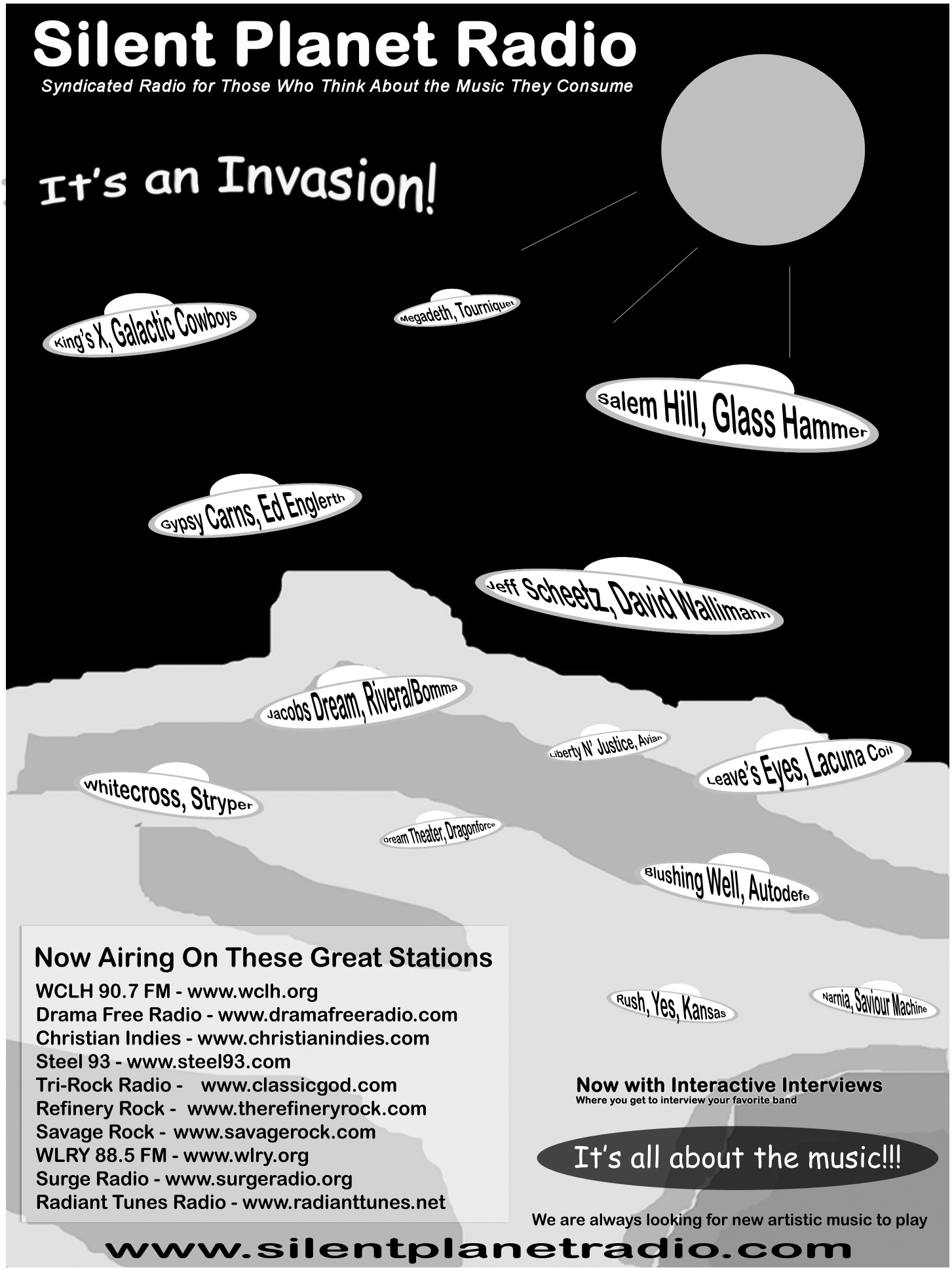

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BRIDE

INTERVIEW BY STEVE ROWE

With the release of their hard hitting new CD, titled *Skin For Skin*, Bride continues to enjoy one of the longest – at times controversial – but never dull careers in Christian hard music. Read on as Dale Thompson discusses the new CD, false prophets, alcohol and musical longevity with veteran metal missionary Steve Rowe of Mortification.

Firstly Dale, welcome once again to Heaven's Metal. Can you tell us where God is leading the Bride ministry in the coming months?

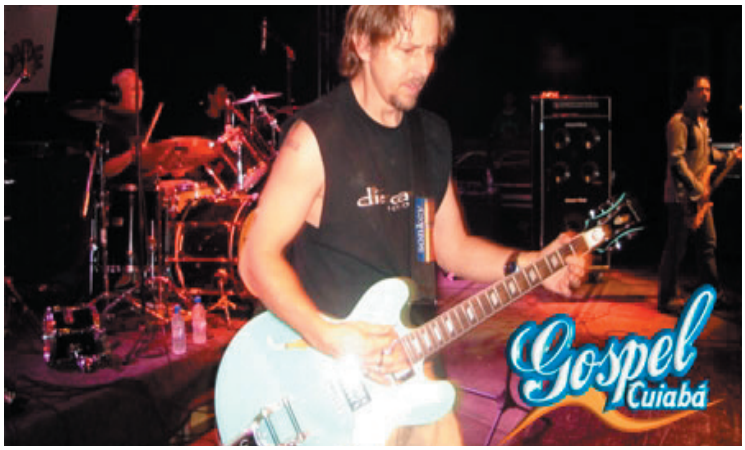
Dale: We had been sitting idle for a long time uninspired, with no direction and really not looking to get the band out there again. We had not quit or stopped or broken up as a band; but, without a vision, we had nowhere to go. Then God began to move Troy and I back into songwriting again. I guess I wrote 50 set(s) of lyrics and threw them all away before I wrote the first song that jolted me back into what I would call inspired writing. Just one day out of the blue my senses were revived and it was like my eyes were open to write again. Around the same time Troy had been writing guitar riffs. We got together and next thing you know we had some really good working songs in the making. We are still unsure where the Lord is leading us, because we have no record deal, no booking agent, no U.S. shows but we have our best CD in years. A fire has been kindled and we know the Holy Spirit will fan the flames. We are ready to move wherever we are needed.

Can you briefly tell us about the lyrical content on *Skin For Skin* and what is your musical approach this time around?

There are many different lyrical styles on this CD. I really do not know how to describe them. I guess there are some tongue and cheek lyrics and there are serious lyrics that are deep and profound. Every lyric means something to me. If the truth be known: Every lyric I have ever written is about me in some way. It is no different with *Skin for Skin*. I just hope that people see the truth in what is being shared. Musically we went after a metal sound. It is not grindcore or thrash, but it is really old school metal. It is the way that I think metal should be defined. There are strong vocals, heavy guitars, blazing guitar solos, thumping bass and hard hitting drums. Some of the music is complicated, but for the most part we wrote these songs to be memorable.

You are one of the few remaining Christian Metal/ Hard Rock acts from the 80's. What was your experience like working with Pure Metal Records in the late 80's?

It was a relationship of deceit, to be honest. We were lied to the three years or so that we were on the label. We were robbed and I am unsure other than by the grace of God why that bitter taste left in our mouth didn't deter us from continuing. Now out of that Pure Metal experience we did see a positive. We left Pure Metal. And we were not even looking for another record deal when Star



Song approached us. I guess we did everything in our power not to get signed by Star Song and they signed us anyways.

On the album *Silence is Madness,* can you tell us the meaning behind the song "Fool Me Once?"
At the time Jimmy Swaggart had just been through his whole ordeal with women and porn and such and, even though I wasn't a Swaggart follower, I saw the ripple effect throughout the country. So, I voiced my thoughts on it that I would not be fooled again by wolves in sheep clothing. We have a gift from God called the Holy Spirit, the Comforter Who will lead us, guide us and direct us into all truth. We have too many preachers, too many teachers in our land today and not enough Holy Spirit teaching us on a personal level. 1 John 2:27: "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." I have not sworn off preachers or teachers, but I am very careful whose ministry I sit under and support. 1 Corinthians 2:13: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

You have been known to have a strong stance against alcohol. After playing in countries like Germany, has your campaign against alcohol changed? In countries like Germany, Italy and Australia drinking wine with a meal or beer at a club show is culturally normal. Did it surprise you when you saw Christians having a beer at your shows in Germany? I am assuming you have played clubs in Germany.
No, not at all, because I can't stand to be around stinking drunks. Especially those who call Jesus Lord (and) then defile their bodies with drunkenness. I will go on record and say that there is nothing wrong with drinking a beer or wine with a meal. But let's be honest, how many people stop at one or even two? The majority of the people that I have seen use alcohol as a means to get drunk and get stupid. If someone is an alcoholic, then just admit it, don't make excuses. I won't condemn you, I just don't like being around it. One part of my family are alcoholics and within that group of people there has been nothing but great tragedy from drug abuse, rapes, suicides, murder, etc. I do not campaign against people drinking any more. Over the past several years my views about many things have changed, so what I would rather speak about has changed. I am not caught up in people drinking or not drinking. Honestly, do what you want. I am not your judge, just don't breath on me if you do it.

Can you explain why Bride has never had an official band name logo? Usually this is how a new release is easily recognized by fans when going to a music store. Do you think it was a mistake not to have a band name logo from the beginning?
None of us are artists. I have never had enough money to pay an artist to come up with one, and no one has offered with anything as cool as Mortification's.

With the success of the *Matrix* films, would still having that name now give the band more interest in the mainstream of music (i.e. internet inquiries because of the name Matrix)? When America was threatened by the Anthrax disease, the band Anthrax got millions of internet hits on their site to the point that their server could not cope. Why the name change to Bride back in the early days?
There was a jazz band named Matrix and I bet they have not had anymore success since the release of the movie *Matrix*. We changed the name because of that silly little jazz band. I wish Bride was getting millions of hits on our website. *The Princess Bride* sure didn't help.

Has Bride followed trends in music – metal in The 80's, hard rock during the Guns N' Roses explosion of success, groove and rock when metal was considered gone in the 90's?
Absolutely. I play what I like and I have liked many trends that have come and gone throughout the years. If we had stuck to playing early metal instead of changing with the times we wouldn't be doing this interview right now. Love or hate the changes, I write what I am inspired to write. That is why I recorded 5 solo CDs. I loved Tom Waits, I have 30 CDs by him, so I wrote some material that fell into the same style as he did. Bride is no different, we have gone through our Iron Maiden / Dio days, our Led Zeppelin days, our Guns N' Roses days, Our Nirvana days, our Rage Against the Machine days, and now we are back to the beginning again. If this CD does good for us, maybe we'll do something different next time. I already have another amazing CD brewing in my head.

What do you think about successful newer bands in Christian rock? Do you think Christian metal & hard rock has lost its original passion for evangelism and Christ centered lyrics?
I am not for sure what is going on. I know there is a lot of talent out there. I don't think the public recognizes Christ in a lot of the bands that claim to be Christians that are playing on the secular side. I see hints in their music, but you can find positive in practically anyone's music that may point to them having some sort of belief in a higher power. I am out of touch with most of the Christian music today. I listen to talk radio and Bride CDs.

Can you give some words of wisdom to young Christians starting out in Christian hard rock and metal bands?
Go to college, get your education, take piano lessons. It will help your math skills.

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BLISSED

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS BECK

Back in Issue #65 Chris Beck had a chance to talk with the lead singer of blissed David Pearson about their new album *Corrosive*. As the interview progressed we discovered that Robert Sweet was actually hired to play drums on this disc but was not actually a member of the band. Then Robert wanted in and after a couple of re-writes on the disc and 18 months later he bailed to be *Reborn*. You have to score Issue #65 to get to the meat of Robert's involvement! This back issue will also clarify any questions as to the musical style of blissed along with what it really took to shoot the "Superhero" video. Now join us for the rest of the story to find out about possible tour dates, DVD releases and when we can expect a new blissed CD. So get into your Barka lounger and prepare to be blissed… again!

Chris Beck: Tell us a little about the new album, *Corrosive*. Looking back, did it turn out the way the band expected?
David Pearson: *Corrosive* has been available to the public for just over a month now, and is now available at any fye, Wherehouse, Strawberries, Coconuts and a bunch more, such as any Transworld store. Just go in and ask for us. The whole process for making this CD was amazing; it turned out like we had hoped and now we are hearing from all our blissed friends that it turned out as they had hoped, too, and that is what really matters.

How do you approach writing lyrics? It seems there are some fairly personal experiences being described in your songs.
It is different with every song, but for the songs on this one it was so natural. Songs like "Superhero" were written in 15 minutes. I was driving home and literally pulled off the highway and scribbled them down on the back of a bill of some kind. Actually, that song--the entire song, music and all--was written in 15 minutes. When I got home Jeff had left a message on my machine with the main riff, and the verse and the lyrics that I had just written and that music were meant for eachother. Other songs on this release are real simple songs with what they say. They are meant to be that way, like "Get Up" and "Corrosive." They are rallying songs, fun and simple, but there are a couple real personal ones too, like "Run", "Bittersweet" and "Betrayal." These songs are the ones that you pour your heart into. With the CD *Corrosive* there is a real variety to what the songs say but the project stays cohesive too.

What blissed songs mean the most to you, and why?
That is a tough one because songs mean things in many different ways. The songs "I Hate You" and "Waking Up The Dead" were the first blissed songs recorded, so they are real special. The songs "Losing You" and "Shut Up" were vocally recorded almost on the fly and the excitement was real cool, but now that we have a second release...well, there are so many more stories behind songs that make them special, you know? "Superhero" was the first one done for this CD

and it was done in minutes and that makes it so cool. I could probably tell a story for every song on the new CD–some funny and some more personal–about every song from the first track to the reprise of "Monster" at the end of the CD.

You've released a video for the song "Superhero," with a few more videos planned. Are there any memorable experiences from the video shoots that you would like to share? Besides providing these to various video shows for airplay, what other goals does the band have for making these videos?
Yeah, the video for "Superhero" is out there playing now. The shoot was real busy, we had a high def wide screen crew do the whole shoot. We shot for seven days straight, and I mean straight. It was crazy, we shot in like five cities and 19 locations; some were built sets, some real nasty locations, it was sick. We have five more videos shot and in editing now. The next ones coming will be for "Getting Better," "Run," "Corrosive," "Rise," and "Get Up." I should tell you that we will be doing more shooting, both another session with the crew and also shooting at concerts, too. We want to have a video for each song and then we will release a great DVD that has all the videos as well as live footage, Corrosive - Sight and Sound. So anyone reading this that is involved in anything that airs videos, get a hold of us and we will make sure you are getting the blissed videos.

There are also rumors of tour plans. Can you provide any details?
We have played our first two shows and have introduced Nathan and Geoff to the world. I know that for Nathan and our fans that was a big deal and it went awesome. We started touring July 22. We will be playing anywhere and everywhere. We have plans for doing 100 plus dates for this one. Keep your eyes on the websites blissed.biz and myspace.com/blissedrocks for more details. I think that there are about ten dates posted now. One cool thing that we are doing this time is stripping it down for some of the dates in a way that is almost as crazy as we are. These dates are called the "In Your Space" dates and what they are is 'private' shows...well, kind of private (laughing). These shows are hosted by blissed friends at any space they can provide, like their basement, garage, church youth room or some small club. Blissed rolls in and provides everything needed and plays an intimate but full-out set and then hangs out for an up-close and personal two hour aftershow party. It is going to be sick and we can't wait. So, just like before with the videos, I say if anyone reading is involved in booking or would like to have blissed do a show...(laughing) get a hold of us. Seriously though, if you go to the website, the details about "In Your Space" are there. It will be fun.

How involved was Robert Sweet with *Corrosive*? Given that you have a permanent drummer, will he have any future involvement with the band?
Well, Robert Sweet was not involved too much with *Corrosive*, so let's start at the beginning with this one. Robert was hired to track on our first CD; he was supposed to track two songs as a guest and we sent him seven to pick from. When he flew in he told us that he loved the songs and wanted to track all seven if that was cool with us and, well...it was (laughing). So after that he flew home and I got a call and he wanted to come back and hang out while we tracked the CD and we thought that was a great idea. He was at this time a good friend and he was always full of crazy ideas and after spending a couple weeks at my studio he flew back home and one day later is when I got the call when Robert Sweet asked to join my little band. It was surreal! We then decided to scrap a couple of the songs and rewrite a few as a full band and that was *Waking Up The Dead*. Then we toured and did radio and had a blast doing blissed for about 18 months. Then it was time to break and write for a new CD and it was at this time that Michael Sweet called all the boys of Stryper about the idea of making his new CD, *Reborn*, a Stryper CD. I told Robert that he would be nuts to not jump all over it, and he did. After all, Stryper was his baby. Once Reborn was moving, we (me and Jeff) had been writing and tracking for *Corrosive*, Robert was simply too busy and we made the decision that a fill-in was needed and well... now we are un-Sweetened. Robert has never officially left the band and I know that is odd, but hey, blissed and Robert have always been unafraid to tread in unknown waters. Robert was like a big brother, you know? I was a kid who had the Stryper logo on my pencil case in school. I was brought to a Stryper show by my dad for a birthday gift. But now we have Nathan and he is our age--he is 24 years old–and he brings so much to the band. And, well, he rocks. He is a savage on the drums. Robert is so happy for us. So, for everyone who has asked about the new CD, Robert was involved in pre-production on the first few songs Jeff and I wrote, but tracked none of the CD.

There has been some controversy over what style of music blissed is, which may have all started with the review of *Corrosive* in the last issue of Heaven's Metal. How would you describe your music to someone who has never heard it?
That is funny to me. Blissed is a rock band, the same way that Disturbed is a rock band and that Avenged Sevenfold is a rock band. So is Norma Jean and Stryper and on and on. Blissed makes hard music that still has a lot of melody. We have found our sound. We found it about half way through making *Waking Up The Dead* and we have it on *Corrosive*. I think that blissed can sit comfortably in Heaven's Metal, but just as and maybe even more comfortably in HM magazine. On the last tour, we played with bands like Skillet and it felt natural. We also played a night with mewithoutyou, blissed and then Norma Jean, and we did absolutely amazing with merchandise and CD sales that night. It was unreal and we had a great time.

Why do you think people are so intent on classifying every band into a certain genre of music?
I think that is more of an industry thing at times, but we are all weird that way sometimes. I don't really know why. Some people even insist on listening to only certain sub-genres of music, such as 'progressive rock' or 'Norwegian black metal.' Don't you think people should be more open-minded about the music and the message that the artists are trying to convey?

Exactly. People miss out on so much great music when they are like that. I have learned to listen to almost anything, to give it a chance and I have found that I can enjoy so many styles of music. What bands have had the greatest influence on blissed?
That is a tough question, because when we write we really lock ourselves in and listen to nobody, but all four of us devour music constantly most of the time. I think that there are a thousand bands on that list, from Bride and Motley Crue to Disturbed and Three Days Grace, from Mike Knott and Kiss to Avenged Sevenfold and As I Lay Dying.

What do the guys in the band do to make a living?
Well, the band is now number one, but we have side things – businesses. I own an advertising company and studio and Geoff has a music school. We have these in place.

What three goals would you like blissed to accomplish over the next year or two?
I want to see blissed climb yet more with *Corrosive*. We did well with our first release and we want this one to step that up, but lets try to get that into three goals. One, to play more than 100 shows for the tour, and in doing that, go out as an opener for a great headline band. We have the backing to do it. Two, have a whole load of new people discover blissed. Three, to release another CD immediately after the *Corrosive* touring is done.

Any last words for the readers of Heaven's Metal?
Thanks to all of you who have bought a blissed CD or come to see us, and to the rest of you...c'mon and do that (laughing). And to all of you...get out there and request blissed on your radio and video stations. And bug Doug Van Pelt to get us in HM now, too. You guys rock and we can't wait to meet you all on the *Corrosive* tour.

✖

BLACK METAL PRIMER [REDUX]

BY ED HELLIG

[This article is a reprint of an earlier piece written for HM]

Christian black metal. The very mention of that phrase sends waves of blasphemous thoughts through the minds of some purists. To the most extreme ones, black metal is not only a mere style of music, but rather a movement rooted and mired in the satanic arts that utilizes music simply as a conduit for hatred and misanthropy. At the very least, they claim black metal has absolutely no business mixing itself with anything remotely divine. So it's only obvious that a legion of bands claiming to play Christian black metal would be received with, say, less than amicable fanfare.

Any foray into the history of Christian black metal would be fruitless without understanding, first and foremost, how black metal actually came to be. A metallic assault that combines the ferocity of death metal with the venomous and sharp precision of thrash and speed metal, black metal has been (for close to thirty years) the most engaging and controversial of all sub-genres in metal. While the triumvirate of Venon, Bathory, and Celtic Frost, is widely considered to be the genre's seminal force, bands such as Hellhammer, Mayhem, Darkthrone, and Sarcófago, helped solidify black metal's dark infamy as they merged their occultist imagery with the intensity of blast beats and bone-chilling vocal shrieks. Some of the early albums that helped forge the blueprint of today's black metal sound include Venom's eponymous *Black Metal* (1982) and *At War with Satan* (1983), Hellhammer's legendary *Apocalyptic Raids* (1984), Bathory's *Under the Sign of the Black Mark* (1987), Mayhem's *Deathcrush* EP (1987) and Sarcófago's *INRI* (1987).

The 90s ushered the so-called 'second wave' of black metal. Some of the early protagonists, such as Mayhem were still present. Immortal, Darkthrone, Emperor, and Satyricon joined them in their pursuit of cold musical malevolence. At the turn of the decade, Scandinavia became a hotbed for the genre. The well-publicized church burnings and cemetery desecrations in Norway perpetrated by the Scandinavian renowned 'Inner Circle' and the slaying of Mayhem's Euronymous at the hand of Burzum's Varg Vikernes served to reinforce the twisted notoriety of the scene. The media blitz surrounding the events increased not only the popularity of black metal, but also the authority's concern about its influence on the corruptible Scandinavian (and worldwide) youth.

At the peak of the genre's popularity, Nuclear Blast Records – under the conspicuous aegis of head honcho Markus Staiger – released the album *Hellig Usvart* (literally translated as 'Holy Un-black') by a band called Horde. Enshrouded in great mystery, the true identity of the project's mastermind known only as Anonymous (perhaps a humorous take on the late Euronymous) was never revealed, as Nuclear Blast received a deluge of hate mail and death/bomb threats targeting the label and its owner. With song titles such as 'Blasphemous Abomination of the Satanic Pentagram' and 'Crush the Bloodied Horns of the Goat', Horde's kult status was almost guaranteed. A limited number of copies of the CD were printed (reported to be around 5,000) and sold out rather quickly, due in part to an ad in *Metal Maniacs*

Frost Like Ashes

Antestor

Magazine by renowned distro Relapse Records. The vitriolic, relentless onslaught contained in the album was palpable, and to some, it has yet to be surpassed. It combined the shrill grimness of Darkthrone and Destroyer 666 with lyrics that proclaimed the annihilation of evil and the glorification of God. It wasn't until many years later that Anonymous' identity was revealed to be none other than Jayson Sherlock, drummer for Mortification and Paramaecium.

Norway's Antestor became only the second Christian black metal band to ever sign with a secular label, the infamous Cacophonous Records. The band had already released *The Defeat of Satan* (1991 demo) and *Despair* (1993 demo) independently, as well as their debut album *Martyrium*, which was released in the same year as Horde's one and only album. *The Return of the Black Death* was unleashed in 1998, but the band soon found itself in a marketing quandary, as Cacophonous (a label that signed and promoted mostly satanic bands) refused to promote the album claiming Antestor never disclosed their religious beliefs to the label. And so, despite critical acclaim, few people were actually able to buy the album when it was first released.

By 1998, the Christian black metal scene was now forging full speed ahead. With the support of small, independent distro/labels like Little Rose and Fear Dark Records (which has since recanted their position and target market away from Christendom), bands like Finland's Immortal Souls and Mordecai (*Divine Wintertime* split CD), Sweden's Crimson Moonlight (*Eternal Emperor*), and Indonesia's Kekal (*Beyond the Glimpse of Dreams*) all released albums that year. The scene seemed as invigorated as ever.

The dawn of a new millennium saw a continuance to the proliferation of quality bands. Vardøger, Sanctifica, Crimson Moonlight, and Drottnar all became household names. Frost Like Ashes, one of the few American bands to adhere to the movement, began raising eyebrows with their self-produced *Pure as the Blood Covered Snow* in 2003. The band features former vocalist Azahel and drummer Adonaijah from kult thrash metal band Possession, and guitarist Sebat from World Funeral and Coven. The band combines the unrelenting speed of death metal with the chaotic, yet beautiful atmosphere of bands like Cradle of Filth and Dimmu Borgir. Their most recent album, entitled *Tophet*, confirms Frost Like Ashes as a worthy American representative of the scene. Frost Like Ashes joined forces with Crimson Moonlight this past summer in the Swedish band's first-ever excursion through the US.

Ironically, it seems Christian black metal has come full circle with the release of Antestor's *The Forsaken* in 2005. As they searched for a drummer, the band sought the talent of none other than Hellhammer, of Mayhem /Arcturus and countless others fame, to be the session drummer for the album. The aggression and sheer brutality of that album, as well as the rousing performance by Hellhammer, ratified the recognition the scene has been seeking since the very beginning.

While it is undeniable that Christian black metal has made an unmistakable impact in the metal world, an underlying question perseveres: what really attracted Christians to a style of metal that had been perceived up until now as purely satanic? A prominent extreme metal media outlet posed the question recently, and added, "is it possible that Christianity has a dark side that incites Christian metalheads to seek black metal as a source of catharsis?" Sebat, guitarist for Frost Like Ashes, opines on the subject: "Although I am positive we all have a dark side, the Bible refers to it as our sin nature. I think that God is on the move and wants those lost sheep – the sick and the outcasts – and is sending some who are willing to go there in to the lions' den. Plus, you have to admit: it's an exhilarating style of music, full of passion and beauty whether done by sinners or not. Therefore, it is the style itself that makes it so intriguing."

Whatever the case may be, one thing is certain: Christian black metal is here to stay, and to the despair of the purists, the scene will grow stronger in talent and numbers. Prolific scenes in Brazil and the rest of the Americas; a new wave of nihilistic, grim black metal bands inspired by the likes of Leviathan and Xasthur; and a brand new militant record label (Son of Man Records) that raises the standard of Unblack Metal; all are indicators that provide verity to that fact. Perhaps the biggest achievement of all is that the Christian black metal scene has survived against all odds, while remaining boldly and defiantly ingenious.

Recommended Discography:

Drottnar – *Anamorphosis*
Industrial-laced fast black metal

Evroklidon – *Flames of Sodom*
mid-paced obscure black metal from the Ukraine. Kult!

Crimson Moonlight – *Veil of Rememberance*
hyper-blast black/death metal

Holy Blood – *Waves are Dancing*
Folk-influenced atmospheric black metal

Divine Symphony – *Reject Darkness*
Symphonic black metal art

Firethrone - *Day of Darkness and Blackness*
ultra-fast, nihilistic, grim unblack

✖

ALBUM REVIEWS

7 DAYS

THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD

Rivel Records has become a breeding ground for talented and prolific musicians and Markus Sigfridsson (Harmony/Darkwater) is certain to be the next to join Christian Rivel and Jani Stefanovic in that metal brotherhood. 7Days (composed of guitarist/songwriter Sigfridsson, bassist Andreas Olsson (Narnia), drummer/producer Daniel Flores (Mind's Eye) and vocalist Thomas Vikstrom) is Sigfridsson's new band/project. With Dream Theaterish guitar crunch dialed-in to perfection (great grooves), complex vocal/choral interplay and lush classical keyboard work (Kaspar Dahlkvist) it appears Markus is going for a heavier, more symphonic/progressive metal sound when compared to Harmony. Vikstrom is a strong, melodic singer who powerfully projects the message of struggle/personal redemption which is found within the lyrics. In tribute to their Swedish metal heritage the band includes a cover of Veni Domine's "Wisdom Calls." Standard now at Rivel Records, the artwork/layout and production quality are excellent. [Rivel] Jonathan Swank

SEVENTH POWER

S/T

This album caught me by surprise when I slid it into my cd player. I was almost hypnotized and taken to a different place in time… Almost! This album as a whole is incredible. The production is clean and the guitar work is off the hook! The lyrics are very well written and specific about glorifying God and causing the listener to look inward about their relationship with the King. Did I mention that Robert Sweet of Stryper fame is the drummer on this disc? He did a phenomenal job with his sticks! As a matter of fact I think that his work on this disc is better than any Stryper disc out there. He layed it down nice and thick! Now here is the other side… Remember I told you I was 'almost' taken to a different place in time? As cool as this disc is I was disappointed by the processed vocals. There was no real vocal range displayed which is definitely missed. After al,l it is a melodic heavy metal disc. Overall, this disc is one that should be added to your collection if you do not already have it. Thanks to Retroactive Records for the re-issue! [Retroactive] Jeff Collins

JUDAH FIRST

DEVIL'S DICE

Though released in 2005, we find it fit to bring it to your attention even now. My band was due to open for these guys a while back, so I snagged their CD, and WOW, was I impressed. A much better release than their first (which I grabbed also), this is an amazing indie release. Style wise, it falls between a very heavy rock and a crunchy metal, with splashes of thrashiness thrown in. Finally, a release with no one screaming, just good old rough and rowdy singing, with enough crunch, hooks and heavy dynamics here to make this reviewer very happy. Give them a spin on myspace to hear what I mean. [Indie] Jeff McCormack

EMOTION

S/T

Emotion started back in '88, with a huge gig opening for Helloween in their hayday at a giant festival in Poland. This CD is sort of a 'best of' and it has some highlights and lowlights. I always find it annoying when the singer is over dramatic and the musicians just try to show off that they can play scales faster than you. Not the case with this release and I was pleasantly surprised! This is your typical metal sound along with some cheesy rhyming attempts, but the songwriting is solid and the melodies are all in key! 3 to 4 songs have super bold lyrics about Jesus, they stick out on this record as some of my favorite tracks. The older tracks lean more towards a new blooded Kansas than a typical pro-metal tribute to early Dream Theater. I would totally play this CD for my "I got saved, but still ride a Harley" friends! If you are craving some good, old fashioned prog-metal from Sweden, this is worth a spin. Massive props to Retroactive Records for keeping metal's history alive! [Retroactive] Drue Mitchell

BABYLON MYSTERY ORCHESTRA

THE GREAT APOSTASY:
A CONSPIRACY OF SATANIC CHRISTIANITY

This is mid-paced Goth rock with some catchy parts now and then, but lacks consistency from song to song. This is a concept album dealing with the theory that the modern day church has been led astray by Satan and has gone apostate. Overall, I found the disc listenable despite its repetition and simplicity, and likewise, lyrically I agree with a few of the points, but I don't agree with the sum. Parental Advisory for this one; do your research first. [Independent] Michael Larson

TORTURED CONSCIENCE

EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW

Brutal Bay Area death metal. Equal parts Vader and Kataklysm, combined with the groove of Dying Fetus and Skinless, this is one of the surprising releases of 2006. Devastating blastbeats, ultra-fast riffs, and inhuman vocals, all conspiring together to position Tortured Conscience in a place of prominence in Christian death metal alongside heavyweights the likes of Sympathy and Pale Horse. Their cover of Bloodgood's "Crucify" injects new life (death?) into the corpse of an old classic. Indispensable, obligatory acquisition for all death metal freaks! [Bombworks] Ed Hellig

SCOURGED FLESH

RELEASED FROM DAMNATION

I can honestly say that I truly rocked out to the first one minute and 10 seconds of this disc. Afterwards it went sour quick! I liked the artwork on the disc better than the actual disc. That means absolutely nothing since I thought the artwork lacked… what's the word… oh yea, art. This is prime example of "just because you own a guitar and a microphone doesn't mean you are a rock star." [Rowe] Jeff Collins

T. MOODY

ACOUSTIC GROOVE... / S.O.S.

In the last year or so, this talented guitarist has released two discs worth of clean, beautiful (mostly mellow) instrumental music. Very tasty. Acoustic Groove...Electric Vibe has a little of both and Songs of Samuel is very clean acoustic picking. [Indie] DVP

Surf this: rivelrecords.com, retroactiverecords.net, judahfirst.com, babylonmysteryorchestra.com, bombworksrecords.com, roweproductions.com, tmoody.com

TEMPLAR
WITCH HUNT

I have to say that despite the album art found on this disc I was thoroughly impressed. Templar is a sideproject of Dark synthpop band Paradoxx. This disc is also supporting the vocal talents of Ez Gomer from Jet Circus on their title track, "Witch Hunt." This is one of those discs that if you don't score now you will be sorry. It will surely turn up on ebay 10 years from now asking a hefty price. The production is top notch, while the lyrics are truly fresh and innovative. Once you give this disc a spin for yourself you may very well find yourself going outside to kick the neighbor's dog. [Soundmass] Jeff Collins

GRAVE FORSAKEN
BESIDE THE RIVER OF BLOOD

This album is absolutely awesome from beginning to end! The production is high and tight along with the lyrics being straight-forward and in your face about the Big Man. This is their debut full-length album that is a raw slab of thrash done right. The album cover art is something to behold as well. If you have friends that are into Metallica or Megadeth, score them this disc. Great job guys and I can't wait for the next release! [Rowe] Jeff Collins

V/A
LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE AGAIN

Retroactive Records has done it again! Bringing some of the greatest Christian metal acts from years past and putting them together on this compilation disc. Armageddon, Bride, Emotion, Circle of Dust, Final Axe, Electrik, Servant, Royal Anguish, Seventh Power, X-Sinner and Ultimatum – just to name a few of the groups you can expect to hear once you put this disc in. What you are about to read is my opinion and I know that it's not always embraced by others. Compilation Discs are never done with the general public in mind; it's usually some guy sitting in the production seat going, "I want to hear…" and then puts it together. The label comes up with some cool cover art and says: "Here is the best of the best!" Out of 20 cuts on this disc I would keep 12. Out of those 12 there are four that I'm still not sure would make the final cut. But you have to score the disc yourself to make your own call. [Retroactive] Jeff Collins

ADIASTASIA
LIFE WAR

Similar in sound to Seven Angels and Eterna with a little Stratovarius and Seventh Avenue mixed in, this debut is a solid offering of keyboard-intensive melodic power metal. The lyrics from this Brazilian band, except for one song, are all sung in English. Though the album's production is unspectacular, the sixth track oddly changes from stereo to mono, somewhat hindering the overall flow of the album. The guitars by Janinho Di'Nizz really stand out; fans of leads and fills will especially relish *Life War*. Adiastasia has talent, to be sure, but could use a little more seasoning. If subsequent songs continue in the vein of "Adiastasia," by far the best track on the album, the future of this band will be an enjoyable one. [Bombworks] Chris Beck

VIRGINIA CREEPER
WHO'S YOUR GOD

Bearing little resemblance to their glam metal sound from several years ago, Virginia Creeper seemingly comes out of nowhere with this release. Best described as gothic industrial mixed with heavy guitars and bold lyrics, fans of Marilyn Manson will love this. Admittedly, I was a bit skeptical when I first saw the packaging, but these songs are well written. The production isn't perfect, but works well with the musical style. The final track is an interesting version of Motley Crue's "Shout at the Devil." It's good to see these guys back on the scene. [MD Records] Chris Beck

CENTURY SLEEPER
AWAKEN

This much-anticipated album, which is a collaboration of Ian Arkley (My Silent Wake, Seventh Angel) and James Allin (Visionaire), sounds exactly like you would expect – atmospheric doom metal with occasional death metal vocals and gothic influences. When you add the obligatory lyrics about death and lost love, all the key elements of a good doom album are in place. The songs, however, disappoint. They simply don't have that hook, that emotional pull that we at first uncomfortably welcome but ultimately yearn for as we experience the journey of a great doom record. *Awaken* is a solid album that fans of this genre should definitely get, but it fails to measure up to the now classic *Shadow of Sorrow* by My Silent Wake in almost every way. [Bombworks] Chris Beck

SUNROAD
FLYING N' FLOATING

This powerful and progressive metal band from Brazil has it all going on – shredding guitars, a killer drummer (Fred Mika), accenting and subtle keyboards and rock solid melodic vocals (Leo Yanes). This 2006 release features 11 songs with various dynamics, including a couple of instrumentals. They also recently released a collection of their songs that span from 1996 to 2003, called *Arena Of Aliens*, which feature Harion Vex on vocals. Back in the day we used to make excuses for albums coming from some world locations. While slight improvements could be made here in songwriting and production, no excuses are necessary for this country's scene nor this band. [Advantage] DVP

ALTERA ENIGMA
ALTERATION

This is like one of those star-studded project bands, where killer musicians get together and throw down. Jason De Ron, Jefray Arwadi, and Kenny Cheong absolutely kill on nine tracks here – some instrumental neo-classical style shred and some foreign vocal deathy/growly metal. This two-year project was recorded super clean, and it's almost hard to tell that the drums were programmed and that this was an "internet" project that was pieced together by players from different parts of the world on their computers. Great job, guys! [Independent] DVP

Surf this: soundmass.com, myspace.com/virginiacreepermusic, sunroad.com.br, alteraenigma.com,

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THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE REVOLUTION?

I guess you have noticed my ads by now at the front, stating that what I do is "True Australian Jesus Revolution Metal." It's kind of a bit of a laugh on the mid-90's Norwegian black metal scene. Bands like Dark Throne stating they were "True Norweigen Black Metal." Around the explosion of black metal popularity in '94 there suddenly came an increased intolerance for my Jesus metal. However, at the time I decided so strongly that I would never stop singing Jesus metal, because I could see alot of Christian bands starting to hide the message.

In the 80's Christian metal was all about Jesus and Evangelism – 100%. Stryper proved that a band could sing about Jesus in every song and become one of the biggest hard rock acts in the world throughout the second half of the 80's. I came back fully to following Jesus in 1984 after hearing Resurrection Band's *Colours* album, given to me by the youth paster from the Baptist Church I had grown up in. That album shaped the rest of my life. Without it I would probably be on the other path.

In the 80's it was all about the Jesus metal revolution. When I toured with my band, Lightforce, supporting acts like Whitecross and Leviticus, it felt like we were changing the world! I never imagined in my wildest dreams that these bands would ever exist ... or come to Australia ... and I was part of seeing people come fully to faith in Jesus at a Christian metal concert. Still today, I marvel at those powerful times and the lyrics that bands like Leviticus had. Check ot the *Best of Leviticus* CD & you will hear what real Jesus metal is all about. Completely unashamed. I remember being at Cornerstone in '93 when the whole hardcore style was starting up & bands like Unashamed were still unashamed. I respect what bands do in "Christian" music, but I challenge you all to think about what example you are setting. Most young Christians playing hard music are of the opinion that their music does not need a Christian message. That somehow that is the old milk way??

The world needs more people like Christian Rivel (Narnia/ Divinefire) out on the battlefield still singing 100% about Jesus. So I, for one, will stay with the focus that every song I sing has a Jesus message. I want my life to be known as one which stood strong against much opposition to always play Jesus revolution metal. I pray this revolution does not die. The "world" is searching so hard for truth. Give it to them straight. I urge you to pray about this.

PASTOR BOB'S INTERNATIONAL REPORT

By Pastor Bob

I always tell people that I have the best job anywhere.? I get to travel and meet the greatest people in the world, work with some of the best bands around, and talk about my favorite subject ? the Gospel of Jesus Christ.? As we begin this new section here in Heaven?s Metal Magazine, I would like to use all three of these elements to share some amazing things with you that are happening worldwide.? In each issue, I will also invite some of my favorite people throughout the world to share their hearts with you.

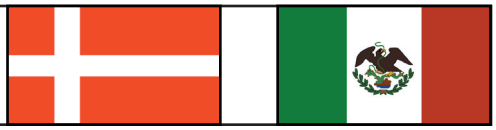
If there is a common denominator that unites all of us in Metal Ministry it is Passion. From Japan to Lebanon, from Denmark to Mexico, you will find like-minded people who have a passion for the Gospel and for Metal music. I speak around the world at Christian festivals and retreats every year. It always amazes me how much we all have in common. The faces are a bit different (hair styles remain about the same), but the hearts of each of God's special messengers are the identical.

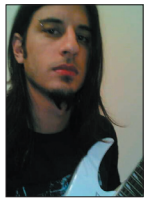
I spoke a few months ago at the International Conference for the Emerging Church in Germany. We had 24 countries present. Most of them were metal-oriented ministries. They all wore the same shirts (Norma Jean, Stryper, Crimson Moonlight, etc.) and carried the same kinds of burdens for their countries. Some spoke English, and some brought translators. But at the end of the day, we all spoke the same language of Christ's love, and a passion for ministry.

I'd like to begin by introducing you to three people. **Sam Andraos** is from Beirut, Lebanon. He is a wonderful young Arab bringing the Message of Jesus Christ to the underground metal crowd there. **Andreas Larsen** travels with me a lot, and also has a powerful ministry in Denmark. **Miguel Martinez** has a unique ministry in the largest city in the world – Mexico City. Remember to pray for these guys. They are your like-minded brothers in Christ! [*sanctuaryinternational.com*]

Lebanon, Denmark, Mexico, & metal

Sam Andraos, Andreas Larsen & Miguel Martinez





Sam Andraos – Beirut, Lebanon

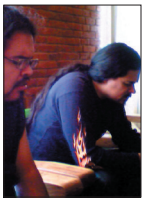
A metal scene in Lebanon? A CHRISTIAN metal scene?!? It is understandable why that is hard to believe. After all, Lebanon is thought to be a typical Arab country. Effectively not so, it is the only country in the world that has arguably equal portions of Muslims and Christians (well, nominal Christians mainly). Fostered by the openness of the latter demography to western cultures, underground (music) scenes managed to thrive in a country where space for organic human relationships (as opposed to religious and political fundamentalism), was an imminent need for new generations seeking escape.

AIM and **EMPTY GRAVE** were two heavy metal bands that pioneered the Christian metal scene in the late '80s and early '90s, inspired by legendary Stryper, Whitecross and others. The rest of the '90s marked a decline, however not without the emergence of softer rock artists like Michel Matar (former Empty Grave). The beginning of the 21st century witnessed the rebirth of what might be described as an embryonic Christian metal scene. Core/alternative rock band Hundred Percent, doom metal band Unforsaken and black/death metal band Kahana are slowly but surely pushing their way through to regain what had been long lost.

The obstacles are many, but God-willing, this small scene promises to grow larger and gain new metalheads to Christ, especially after the importation of major international Christian metal music to Lebanon, starting a couple of years ago. A new music club and studio will be also opening soon in a popular area, fully dedicated to helping Christian artists and bands. Pray for us.

Andreas Larsen – Aarhus, Denmark

In 2003, my band Barricades was the first Danish metal band out on the scenes to share the light of Christ. Now there are two Christian metal bands here in Denmark. It really helps to have Christian friends from our neighboring countries who have rocked the stages for years before us! There is not much of a Christian Metal scene in Denmark, so we do gigs together with secular metal and hardcore bands. One event we did was an awesome day with 7 metal and hardcore bands (the two Christian bands: ThisWayToFearNothing and Barricades), tattoo stand, underground cult clothes stands, big screen PlayStation2 and *Jackass* entertainment during the band shifts. We are looking forward to watching the Christian Metal scene expand here in Denmark.



Miguel Martinez – Mexico City

God is doing real miracles even when the underground Church in Mexico is suffering. It has been difficult for us with hard financial problems, but people are getting saved – even in secular concerts without Christian bands playing! We don't always need a band to reach people. We need Christ. People in the streets are getting saved. Hundreds of people, even those who are very extreme, are listening to the Gospel in the underground scene and many are receiving Jesus. One of these was a wizard, who is now preaching on the streets with us! Another was a vampire.

God is also doing wonderful things with the parents of the underground people. This is crazy, because the normal thing in normal Churches would be parents bringing their sons and daughters to Christ. But now the sons and daughters are preaching to their parents and bringing them to met Jesus. Just last Sunday about 15 families received Jesus.

The same thing is starting in Guatemala, el Salvador and Honduras. God is moving right now. A few months ago, after a Deborah and Exousia concert, an underground Church was started in Honduras. Please pray for all in Mexico, Central and South America. All the glory is to Christ!

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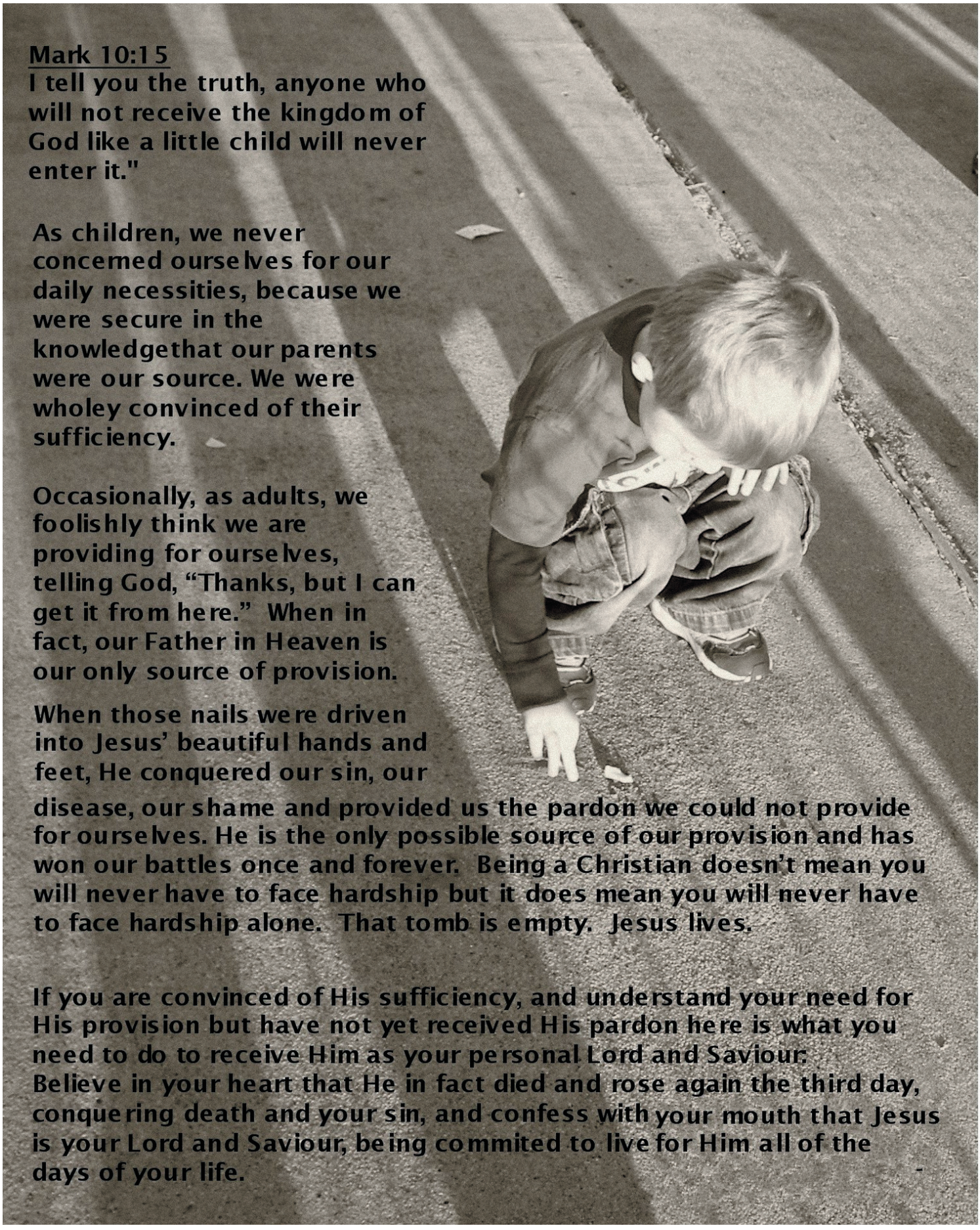

Mark 10:15
I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

As children, we never concerned ourselves for our daily necessities, because we were secure in the knowledgethat our parents were our source. We were wholey convinced of their sufficiency.

Occasionally, as adults, we foolishly think we are providing for ourselves, telling God, "Thanks, but I can get it from here." When in fact, our Father in Heaven is our only source of provision.

When those nails were driven into Jesus' beautiful hands and feet, He conquered our sin, our disease, our shame and provided us the pardon we could not provide for ourselves. He is the only possible source of our provision and has won our battles once and forever. Being a Christian doesn't mean you will never have to face hardship but it does mean you will never have to face hardship alone. That tomb is empty. Jesus lives.

If you are convinced of His sufficiency, and understand your need for His provision but have not yet received His pardon here is what you need to do to receive Him as your personal Lord and Saviour:
Believe in your heart that He in fact died and rose again the third day, conquering death and your sin, and confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord and Saviour, being commited to live for Him all of the days of your life.